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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

No. 75 TORONTO MAY, 1947

BAHR COLLECTION OF CHINESE ANTIQUITIES

The Bahr collection, loaned by Mr. Alfred Bahr, formerly of Weybridge, Surrey, England, and now of Montreal, will be on exhibition in the Manchu Gallery of the Royal Ontario Museum from May 8th.

Famous for its group of burial jades, the collection also includes miniature porcelains prized by the Chinese as precious desk ornaments; some have exquisite glazes of great purity and depth of colour and others are painted in most delicate and beautiful shades of coloured enamels.

There are a number of unusually beautiful examples of the cream glazed ware from Fukien and some very fine monochrome porcelains in sang-de-boeuf, as well as small Buddhist and grave figurines, a few very lovely gilded bronze vessels and a large colection of snuff bottles.

OPOSSUMS IN ONTARIO

"Down in the South where the sly old 'possum
Hides in the sycamore tree——."

So run the opening lines of an old song. And it is the southland that is usually thought of as the home of the opossum. During the past fifty years or so however, these grizzled gray animals a little larger than the house cat, have been trekking northward, the records show. They have been reported from southern Ontario at odd times through the years, especially in the tobacco belt which follows the Erie shore. Some of the Ontario opossums are known to have been escaped pets brought in by the tobacco workers, but the weight of evidence suggests some of them have reached the province under their own steam, say mammalogists at the Royal Ontario Museum. Chewing hungrily at a tough ear of corn, a recent opossum to visit Ontario was found in an open, snow-covered field near Chatham, by farmer Harry Blackburn's nephew, in mid-February of this year. This male 'possum was not very happy, for long tail and thin hairless ears alike had been frost-bitten. Despite kindly care and feeding the animal died a short time after capture, and was sent to the Museum zoological collection. When cornered by an enemy this mammal feigns death almost to the point of conviction. Hence the familiar expression "playing 'possum."

TORONTO CAMERA CLUB ORGANIZES NEW SECTIONS

Dr. V. B. Meen, Assistant Professor of Mineralogy of the University of Toronto, and Associate Director of the Royal Ontario Museum of Geology and Mineralogy, has been made head of a committee of the Toronto Camera Club to supervise new sections for nature and scientific slides, to be included in the Fourth Canadian International Colour Slide Exhibition of Photography in 1948. Dr. Meen is an ardent colour worker and has prepared hundreds of technical colour pictures for use in his lectures. He is at present completing a series of two hundred pictures of fine mineral specimens to be used by universities throughout the country. He is a director of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Club which societies have joined the Toronto Camera Club in sponsoring next year's exhibition.

FLYING FLOWERS OF MAYTIME

Ramblers through the Maytime woodlands, gazing low for violets and trillums or admiring the marsh marigolds beside meandering brooks, would find flowers and jewels on the wing by peering upward into trees and bushes. They are the woodland warblers, and the woods of Springtime are almost literally full of them, at times. Though tiny, the eye is easily trained to find them and their superb coloring creates a fantasy of flying flowers. Yellow warblers like miniature canaries are there, black-throated blue and black-throated green warblers, yellow-throated, yellow-breasted, chestnut-sided warblers, and sprightly fellows sharply striped in black and white. But the Maytime finery of these birds in all its color combinations defies description. Pocket-sized bird guides afield and a study of the warbler collection at the Royal Ontario Museum (they stay put) make the best preparation for the identification of woodland warblers and there is no nature study which brings a richer reward of beauty and fascination.

FISH STORY FROM FERNIE

May 1st opens the trout season and the modern angler will once again tell his tall stories. However the student of fossil fishes also obtains occasional "whoppers." Recently the Geological Survey of Canada sent to Dr. L. S. Russell, of the Royal Ontario Museum of Palaeontology a portion of a fossil fish that was, when complete, about 5 feet in length. This fossil was obtained from a reservoir site near Fernie, B.C., and is believed to date from the Triassic period, over 150 million years ago. The shape of the body was deeply rhombic, with large dorsal and anal fins, like the modern sea breams, and like the latter the Triassic fish fed on shellfish and other hard food. However, this fossil differs from most modern fishes in having the body covered by a system of heavy, rectangular, bony scales, fitting together like the siding of a house.

A BRIDE OF THE EARLY 19th CENTURY

Among the most interesting costumes now on view in the New Acquisition Gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum are those of an Irish bride of 1828 and her bridesmaid, lent by Mrs. J. Y. Ormsby. This is one of the most attractive periods in the history of costume with its hour-glass figures, wide sleeves, and dainty trimmings. Much stress is laid nowadays on the dress that can be used for a variety of occasions by the addition of a jacket or other accessories. This is not new. Both these dresses have two pairs of sleeves, one long and one short, and each dress has a beautiful little cape for daytime wear covering up the low neckline which was suitable for evening functions. Other accessories such as slippers, gloves, stockings, and the bonnet worn by the bridesmaid complete this delightful display, making it one of the most charming costume exhibitions the Museum has had recently.

MAY EXHIBITIONS

May 6–31—Crich Bird Pictures—Courtesy of Globe and Mail.
May 6–29—Annual Exhibition of Art Association of Toronto Elementary Schools.
May 30–June 5—Metal Arts Guild Exhibition.